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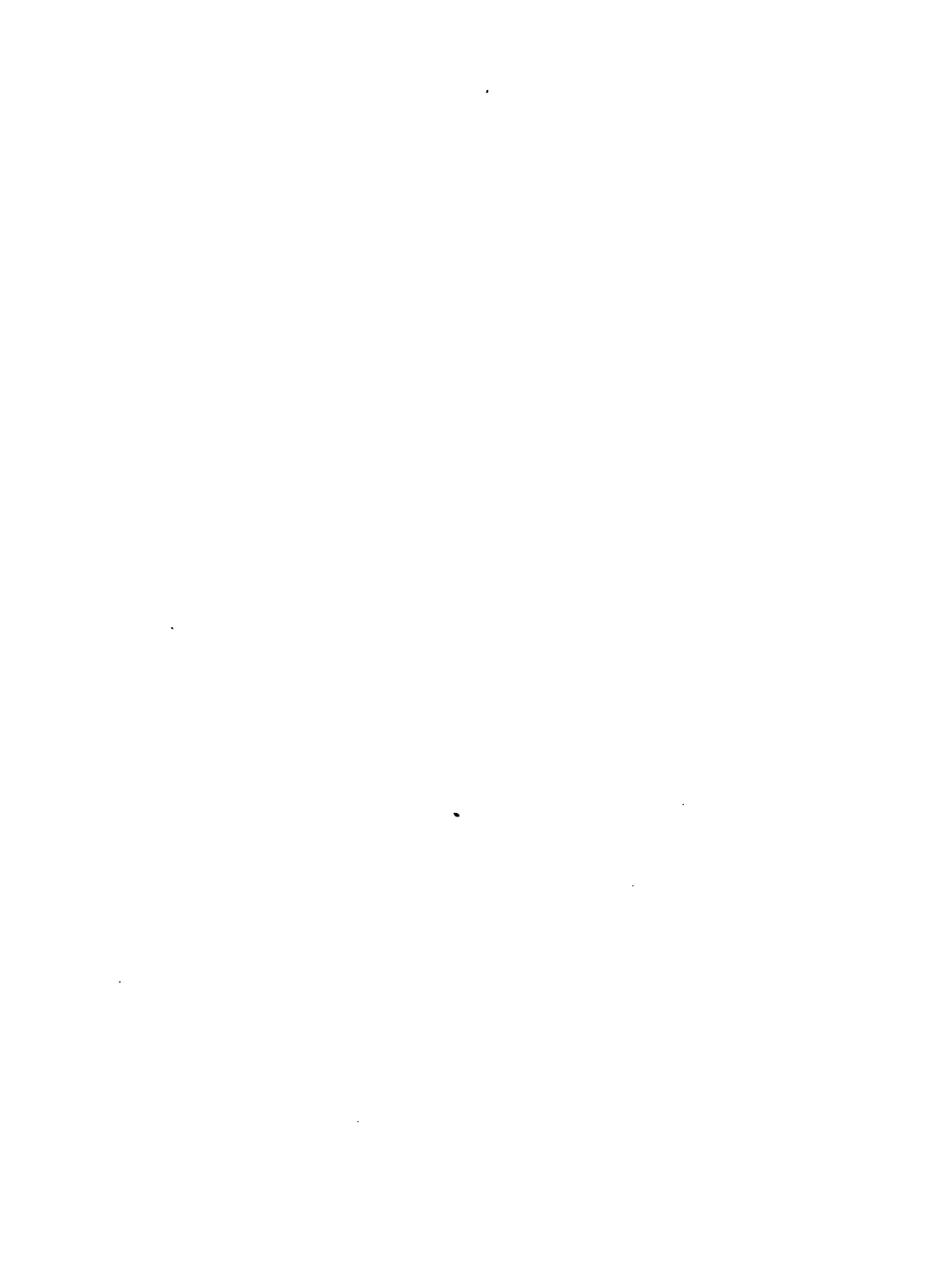
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ANIMAL FABLES

FROM THE

DARK CONTINENT

BY

A. O. STAFFORD

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AMERICAN BOOK COMPANY

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A. O. STAFFORD

ANIMAL FABLES

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PREFACE.

These fables have been selected, adapted and arranged from the folklore of the Negro race. Twenty of them were drawn entirely from African sources and the other fourteen from American. The striking similarity between the two groups shows their common African origin and relationship.

It is now admitted that the great number of quaint animal stories once so frequently told among the slave population of our southern states in their odd dialect were brought to America by their ancestors from the shores of Africa.

There exists among the natives of that country a vast store of oral literature in the form of allegories, legends, fables and proverbs, in the telling of which they take great delight.

This literature is especially rich in stories dealing with animals, in which many curious and interesting reasons are given for their particular habits and physical peculiarities.

The aim of the present collection is to furnish for the children of the lower grades some of the most characteristic fables of that literature in a form that can be easily read and understood and in which the original spirit has been preserved.

A. O. STAFFORD,
CHEYNEY, PA.

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ANIMAL FABLES

THE HAPPY AGE IN THE ANIMAL WORLD

The children wanted to hear more of the plantation stories like those their new schoolmate, Frank, had told them of the strange doings of animals.

"Please, Miss Bertha, tell us one of those stories," begged little Mabel. "Oh, do, Miss Bertha," called out Fred from the last seat in the middle row. Fred had seen in a book at the public library many amusing animal pictures illustrating some of the stories but could not read the queer language in which they were written.

"Yes, yes, Miss Bertha, do tell us about this new kind of story," came at once from different parts of the schoolroom. The teacher held up her hand for order, then asked, "How many would like to hear an old plantation fable? "

Hands went up from thirty-five little desks and thirty-five pairs of bright eyes danced in thirty-five happy faces.

"Well, my little friends," began Miss Bertha, "I will tell you some that I have read and heard. Many of these stories came across the sea from a far away country called Africa. They were

brought by the slaves from that far off land to this country. Later they were told in the cabins and fields of our Southland by the slave people in their odd, broken English which we now call Negro dialect. Many of these stories are told to this day and have not found their way into books. I will tell you some of them from time to time in our own language, beginning now with the happy age in the animal world:

In that long, long ago time before the large ships came with their white sails and before the gun was heard in the jungle, the elephant was king of all the animal world. His size, strength and wisdom made him a mighty one in a land of dense forests, wide plains, deep rivers and high mountains.

Next to him in rank was the lion who had charge of the animals of the thick woods. The eagle was the headman among the birds and the alligator had to carry out the orders of the king among those that lived in the long, deep rivers.

As king elephant was a wise and kind ruler, he was obeyed by his headmen and loved by his subjects; and all the animals under him lived in peace and happiness.

No one then thought of his size, his strength, his weakness, his cunning or his nimbleness. When the roar of the lion was heard in the woods, the deer did not bound away in fear. The cry

of the leopard did not frighten the dog. The yelp of the jackal did not worry the dove and the swoop of the hawk had no terrors for the hen and her little children.

For many, many years this happy kingdom lasted. Nothing came to disturb it except now and then a fierce windstorm or the sharp lightning and heavy thunder that came in the stormy seasons. So the kingship remained in the strong family of the elephant.

But at last a strange thing happened. In the dark jungle appeared a creature unlike any creature the animals had seen before. It stood upright on two legs holding out from its body a long spear. Its coming caused great alarm. This upright creature was Man. With his spear he killed many of the jungle people; others he caught, carried to his home and taught them to hunt their brothers. All of this brought a great change among all the animals.

In trying to escape from one another as well as from the hunter, the strong ones began to harm the weak, the nimble ones sought safety in trees and holes, and those that were cunning played tricks on the strong and the quick.

Thus passed away in that far off time, after the coming of Man, the happy age in the animal world.



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THE SQUIRREL AND THE KINGSHIP

Now after Man had killed and caught many of the beasts there was much sorrow in the land of the great jungle king. Then the rules of the jungle were not obeyed, and as a result both the big and little animals were unhappy. Some thought that a change of rulers would bring a return of peace and happiness.

So a secret meeting was held in a large banana grove. When all had gathered, up spoke the lion, "We must have a new king."

"Yes, a new king," screamed the eagle. A new king, a new king," all shouted. "But who shall he be?" asked the leopard.

"Lion, noble lion," answered the wolf.

"No, no," said the leopard. "Why the lion instead of me?"

"Then the swift deer," said the fox.

"Nonsense," laughed the hyena, "let us have the great eagle."

"No, we must have a king who lives in the jungle," said the nimble squirrel.

"Why not make the quick little squirrel our king?" the tall giraffe asked.

This idea seemed so funny that many animals

laughed out, "Yes, make quick little squirrel our king."

In a short while, strange though it may seem, it was agreed that the squirrel should be the king in place of the elephant.

Then the lion was asked to speak for the meeting. Calling the squirrel to the front, he said in a slow, deep voice, "Little squirrel, to-morrow we will make you king in place of the elephant."

Then, to the surprise of all, that little animal said, "Not to-morrow, brother lion, it shall be to-day."

"But," said the lion, "we must get the feast ready, find the throne and the footstool for our new king."

"No, no," replied the squirrel, "it must be to-day and at once." The animals could not believe their ears and became very angry.

"Speak, lion," many cried.

"Impatient squirrel, you cannot be our king—you would not rule us wisely."

With these words the meeting came to an end. As the animals passed on their way home the voice of the owl was heard hooting from the trees:

"To-day, Waugh, O!
At once, Waugh, O!
Lost the squirrel the kingship
Waugh, O! Waugh, O!"

THE DOG AND THE KINGSHIP

Another day the discontented brethren of the woodland met to select a king.

At the meeting this time all the things that a king should have were on hand. There were the throne, the footstool, the cap, the staff, the ring, the grass mat and the feast table.

When all had gathered, up spoke the lion again, "We must have a new king, brothers."

"Yes, a new king," cried the eagle.

"A new king, a new king," all again shouted.

"But who shall he be?" once more asked the leopard.

Remembering their last meeting some were timid about choosing. At last the hissing voice of the snake was heard asking, "Why not the alligator?"

"No, no," replied the turtle.

"Then the great boar," said the buffalo.

"Never, never," growled the wolf.

Thus it went on for quite a while—choosing and objecting. At last the voice of the lion was heard, "Well, brothers, we shall never agree in this way upon a king. Let us take the dog."



A cheer rang through the meeting. "The dog, the dog shall be our king."

"Make way for the new king—come forward, brother dog," spoke the lion. "Let the drums sound and the horns blow."

Then the throne of twigs, the footstool of dried grass, the cap of leaves, the ring of leaf stems, and the staff were brought forward. The feast was spread and all made ready for the crowning and for a happy time.

Just as he was taking his seat upon the throne the eyes of the new ruler fell upon the breast of a fowl lying upon the feast table. A feeling of greediness came over him. He stood up and with a quick leap snatched the breast and ran away into the bush.

Great was the surprise of all the animals. They felt hurt at such unkingly conduct, and with much sorrow the second meeting to select a new ruler was closed.

In a short while the parrot was heard singing, "Who shall be our king?" And from a distance the answer came back from the departing animals:

"Not the greedy one, the greedy one, the greedy one,

No-no, no-no, no-no,

Not the greedy one, the greedy one, the greedy one."



THE DOG AND THE CLEVER RABBIT

There were many days when the animals did not think about the kingship. They thought of their games and their tricks, and would play them from the rising to the setting of the sun.

Now, at that time, the little rabbit was known as a very clever fellow. His tricks, his schemes, and his funny little ways caused much mischief and at times much anger among his woodland cousins.

At last the wolf made up his mind to catch him and give him a severe punishment for the many tricks he had played upon him.

Knowing that the rabbit could run faster than he, the wolf called at the home of the dog to seek his aid. "Brother dog, frisky little rabbit must be caught and punished. For a nice bone will you help me?" asked the wolf.

"Certainly, my good friend," answered the dog, thinking of the promised bone.

"Be very careful, the rabbit is very clever," said the wolf as he left.

A day or so later while passing through the

woods the dog saw the rabbit frisking in the tall grass. Quick as a flash the dog started after him. The little fellow ran and, to save himself, jumped into the hollow of an oak tree. The opening was too small for the other to follow and as he looked in he heard only the merry laugh of the frisky rabbit, "Hee, hee! hello, Mr. Dog, you can't see me."

"Never mind, boy, I will get you yet," barked the angry dog.

A short distance from the tree a goose was seen moving around looking for her dinner.

"Come, friend goose, watch the hollow of this tree while I go and get some moss and fire to smoke out this scamp of a rabbit," spoke the dog, remembering the advice of the wolf.

"Of course I'll watch, for he has played many of his schemes upon me," returned the bird.

When the dog left, the rabbit called out from his hiding place, "How can you watch, friend goose, when you can't see me? "

"Well, I will see you then," she replied. With these words she pushed her long neck into the hollow of the tree. As the neck of the goose went into the opening the rabbit threw the dust of some dry wood into her eyes.

"Oh, oh, you little scamp, you have made me blind," cried out the bird in pain.

Then while the goose was trying to get the dust

from her eyes the rabbit jumped out and scampered away.

In a short while the dog returned with the moss and fire, filled the opening, and, as he watched the smoke arise, barked with glee, "Now I have you, my tricky friend, now I have you." But as no rabbit ran out the dog turned to the goose and saw from her red, streaming eyes that something was wrong.

"Where is the rabbit, friend goose?" he quickly asked.

"Why, he threw wood dust into my eyes when I peeped into the opening." At once the dog knew that the rabbit had escaped and became very angry.

"You silly goose, you foolish bird with web feet, I will kill you now for such folly." With these words the dog sprang for the goose, but only a small feather was caught in his mouth as the frightened bird rose high in the air and flew away.



THE DOG AND THE LEOPARD

Far away in the heart of the jungle the spotted leopard lived in a dark cave. To this place the dog came after his failure to catch the rabbit.

He made friends with the leopard, and a strong tie sprang up between them. They shared and fared alike in all of their hunting trips. The leopard was stronger and bolder than the dog and caught most of the prey.

For this reason the dog lived so well that after a time he became fat and lazy. Instead of being anxious to help in doing his share of the hunting he sought to shirk it. In order to keep his friend from complaining the dog suggested that each should hunt alone. The leopard agreed to this plan.

Then, whenever the spotted one went out to hunt, the dog would follow slowly behind. When the prey was seized the dog would cry out from his hiding-place, "Hi, hi,—men wake up! Leopard is here. Kill him, kill him!" Surprised at the sudden sound the leopard would leave his prey and lope quickly away.

The dog, pleased with the success of his trick, would then quickly pick up the fallen prey and run home to the den with it. For several days matters went on in this way.

After a time the leopard became weary of losing his prize and thought that he would visit Muzimu—the beast wizard—he who knew all things. So in the densest part of the jungle he visited the all-knowing Muzimu.

After hearing the story of the animal, the beast wizard answered in a deep voice: “Go, leopard, watch your friend the dog, and your ill luck will fly away.”

The next night the leopard went forth on his usual hunting trip. The village of men was reached and, quick as a flash, he was over the fence among the goats.

Soon the old cry rang out: “Hi, hi—men wake up! Leopard is here. Kill him, kill him!”

Remembering the words of Muzimu, the leopard turned quickly and saw his false friend hiding in the grass.

With eyes aflame with anger the leopard sprang after him. Burying his tail between his hind legs the dog turned and ran for his dear life. Round and round the village he ran, darting this way and that. Finally he dashed into Man’s house, straight under the bed, where he lay gasping and panting. Here the other one was afraid to come.

Seeing that Man, who had been frightened by his sudden coming, was about to kill him with his spear, the dog crawled from under the bed to Man's feet, licked them and turned on his back as if begging for mercy.

Man took pity on him, tied him up and made a pet of him. Ever since then the dog and Man have been firm friends, but a great hatred has existed between the dog and the leopard.

The dog's back always bristles straight up when his enemy is about, and there is no truer warning of the leopard's presence than that given by the dog, while the spotted one would rather eat a dog than a goat any day.

This is the way—as is said in Africa—that the friendship between these two animals was broken up and why the dog to-day lives in the home of Man.



THE CAT AND THE HEN

Near the great forest there lived a hen and her happy family of little children. From morn till night the little ones followed their mother from place to place, scratching and picking, answering her "Cluck, cluck," with a soft "Peep, peep."

To this happy home came the cat with her quiet tread and smooth coat of fur. "Let us be friends," purred the cat, looking at the hen with her mild, sleepy eyes.

"A friend is always welcome," clucked the honest chicken. After a short talk the cat moved quietly away.

A day or so later a little kitten visited her with this message: "Friend, mother wishes you to go with her to the village of her woodland cousins."

"Little kitten, tell your mother that I will go."

After the kitten had gone the hen remembered that the hour for the visit had not been set. Calling one of her little children she said: "Tiny one, go and ask the cat at what hour we shall go to the village."

The tiny chicken went to the home of the cat, bowed to her and gave the message.

The cat said, "Tell your dear mother to come to my house to-morrow morning when the rooster first crows."

The obedient little chicken did as it was told.

The next morning when the rooster crowed the hen did not stir. When the sun was high the cat ran softly to her house asking, "Why did you not come, friend, at the first crowing of the rooster?"

"Sister cat, though I am your friend, I never get up and leave my house at the first crowing of the rooster, because it is then still dark."

"Why not go now?—the sun is high," returned the cat in her softest voice.

"It is well, sister,—come, little ones, we will visit to-day the woodland cousins of our friend."

They started on their way—the cat going before.

The day was bright, and the children of the hen enjoyed the strange sights along the road. There were pretty butterflies to chase and slow-moving bugs to catch. The hen was very much pleased with her new friend as she seemed to be so gentle and so kind.

After a long walk sounds were heard coming from the village of the cat's cousins. Then suddenly the cat turned and seized two of the hen's little children.

In anger and fear the chicken mother called out, "Sister cat, what do you mean?"

In a soft voice the other purred: "Friend, the

little ones I took did not have enough strength to walk. They may fall by the wayside, therefore I took them so that we may go on."

"If you do these things I cannot be your friend."

"If you will not have me for a friend, I will not let you return home," replied the cat in a voice no longer soft.

The poor hen then quickly turned and started for home. With a spring the cat caught the hen's head in her mouth just as she made a shrill cry for help.

Being near the village her cries were heard. The woodland people ran out to see what was the trouble.

Knowing what a mean trick she had played, the cat felt that her cousins would not help her, bounded rapidly away and entered the deep forest.

When the poor frightened hen told her story to the forest people they said, "Never again trust the cat—she is too cunning for you."

The old people now tell their children that since that day cats and chickens have never more been friends.



THE CAT, THE RAT, AND THE FOX

One day a piece of cheese was found near the village of Man by a rat and a cat. After taking it to a quiet spot they could not agree how to divide it between them.

They began to quarrel, and after many harsh words had passed they finally called in the fox to be the judge.

Now the fox was very cunning and very selfish, as well as something of a rogue.

"I am glad to help you, brothers," he said, as he arranged a flat stick across a log to act as a balance or scales. "Hand over the cheese, friends, and I will soon tell how much each one should receive." Before placing any of the cheese on the scales the fox cut off a piece and placed it near him, saying with a smile, "This is for the judge."

When he did this the cat and the rat looked at each other with a frown.

Then he cut what was left into two parts and placed a piece on each end of the scales.

"It does n't balance, friends," said the fox after

a moment's gaze at the scales. Then he took off both pieces, began to cut off some more, and, placing it with the first piece, said again with a smile, "This is also for the judge."

The fox had now taken more than half of the cheese, and in one voice the cat and the rat spoke out: "Hold on, judge. This is wrong. You are going to take all of our nice food and leave us none."

The fox pretended to be very angry, removed the scales, gathered up all the cheese saying, "Begone, you rogues. You live through stealing and yet want to tell me how to do justice. It is well that I take only the cheese and spare your lives. I have a great mind to kill you both."

In a shorter time than it takes to tell it the fox was all alone with a good meal of excellent cheese.

It is not always wise to call in a third party to settle disputes.

WHY THE CAT CAME TO MAN'S HOUSE

From the shelter of the dense woods about the village of Man many of the animals had watched the young people dancing in the silvery moonlight.

They seemed to be having such a pleasant time that the animals wanted to try the same sport.

So, many of them came together one day to make plans for a woodland party.

The elephant, the rhinoceros, the giraffe, the wolf, the leopard, the fox, the antelope, the cat, and the mouse met to talk over the matter.

While making plans for the gathering the fox suddenly asked, "How can we dance without a drum to make music for us? "

"We must have a drum," growled the wolf.

But when this plan came to be discussed a serious objection was discovered. The head of the drum must be covered with a skin of some kind, and no animal was willing to be killed that his skin might be made into a drumhead for his fellows to dance around.

At last someone thought that as no one would



furnish a dead skin for the drumhead, the want might be supplied by each animal giving live skin enough from his body. This live skin was to be taken from a part where it could best be spared.

"Let us take the skin from our ears," said the elephant.

"No, no, my ears are small enough now," cried the little mouse, "but I will give a part of my long tail."

"But that will be unfair to me," spoke up the antelope.

After a long talk the meeting came to a vote on the subject. The elephant's idea was agreed upon.

Then, in anger, the mouse spoke: "This drum idea is nonsense, anyhow. I will have nothing to do with it as I do not intend to have my ears cut." With these words he left the meeting.

In time the drum was finished and was carefully put away for the dance until a moonlight night came.

But the mouse was so curious about the drum that he crept up the next night to the spot where it was placed. Then, still more curious to hear how it would sound, he began to beat it.

The animals, hearing the sound, came running to see what was the matter. Seeing the cause of the noise the mouse was quickly surrounded, seized, and thrown into prison.

Among the animals that had come to the sound of the drum was the cat. Now when he saw the nice, plump little mouse shut up in prison where he was helpless, he desired to eat him. So strong was the desire that he said to himself: "I must have that little fellow for a meal."

That night, when all the woodland people were far away from the prison, he broke into the gates, caught the mouse and ate him.

Then, knowing that he did not dare face his friends after doing this wrong, the cat ran away from the woods to the home of Man and found there a nice warm spot by his fireside.

THE RABBIT AND THE OTHER ANIMALS

One day many of the animals planned to build a house in which to place their winter food. All agreed to help.

When the rabbit's turn came to carry some of the bush and one of the poles, he said, "Brothers, my dear wife is very sick and I must go home to nurse her." As the clever little rabbit did not like to work he thought this was a good excuse to go home.

When the house was finished, each animal brought his own food and put it in a place where it could be easily found in the rainy season.

The lion, leopard, and wolf brought dried meat; the elephant, deer, and cow brought grass and leaves; the squirrel brought acorns and hickory nuts. Persimmons were brought by the opossum, and worms and seeds were brought by the birds.

While this was going on the little rabbit from his hiding-place near by was softly humming to himself:

"Hi, hi, brothers, diddle de dee,
Store in, store in, store in for me."



When the house was full, the animals left. Then the rabbit crept quietly in, looked about, and made up his mind to live there and eat what his friends had gathered.

He carried in some water and two large horns, fastened the door and made himself cosy in a warm bed in a corner of the house.

"What fun," he said to himself from day to day, "to eat the food of my brothers and no work to do."

When the rainy season came, the deer came to get his pile of grass.

The door of the house was fastened. He knocked, but no answer came. He knocked again—still no answer.

After a while the rabbit took one of the large horns and called out through it in a loud voice, "What is that? "

The big voice made the deer jump in fear, but he answered, "It is brother deer."

Then the rabbit called out again through the horn, "What do you want here, anyhow? "

"I want to come in and get the grass I put away for the winter," returned the deer.

"You can't come in," came back the voice through the horn.

"Who are you inside? " now asked the angry deer.

Then the rabbit took the larger horn and in a

louder voice he shouted, "I am a better one than has ever been in here before."

The voice was so loud and so strange in sound that the deer ran off in fear and told the other animals that a dreadful Thing had taken their house in which their winter food was stored.

The animals were very much surprised to hear this, but they agreed to go together to the house and find out what the dreadful Thing was.

When all had come to the house, the lion was asked by his friends to knock. The bold lion knocked on the door, but no answer came. He knocked again, still no answer. Then he asked, "Who is that in there?"

The rabbit took up the larger horn, and with all his strength called out, "I am a better one than has ever been here before."

The voice was so harsh and so loud all the animals thought the deer was right and that a dreadful Thing—possibly a spirit—was in the house. They were afraid to break open the door and in terror ran away.

They never knew what a trick the rabbit had played upon them.

Sometimes a big noise is taken for the truth.

THE RABBIT AND THE ANIMAL WIZARD

Muzimu was an animal wizard. He told what would happen to-day and to-morrow in the animal world. He also gave wisdom to the woodland creatures.

The clever little rabbit, though very wise, wanted to be more so.

One day he went to the home of Muzimu and said, "Great wizard of the woods, please give me some more knowledge."

"You are wise already, little fellow," replied Muzimu.

"But not wise enough, great one."

"Well, bring me a live snake and then I shall see what I can do for you."

Leaving the home of the wizard the rabbit found a long stick and went to the house of the snake. There he found that crawling creature coiled upon a log.

"Good day, friend snake," spoke the rabbit.

"Good day, little one, what have you there? "

"A stick which is longer than you."

"Nonsense, boy."



"Let us see," said the cunning rabbit.

The snake stretched himself along the log.

The rabbit put his stick near the snake as if to measure him. Then, quick as a wink, he slipped a string around the snake's neck and held him fast to the end of the stick.

"Let me go, let me go," cried the surprised snake, as he turned and twisted on the stick.

The rabbit said nothing, but ran quickly with him to Muzimu.

The wizard could not believe his eyes when he saw the wiggling snake on the end of the rabbit's stick.

After getting over his surprise he said: "Little one of the grass, if you can fool the snake you have all the sense you want."

"No, no, mighty Muzimu, give me more sense."

"Go, then, and bring me a swarm of bees, and when you bring them I will give you all the sense you want."

The little rabbit ran off and found a big gourd. After cleaning it out through a hole he had cut in the bottom, he put some honey in it and tied the gourd to a long pole. Then he found the bees' nest and left the gourd near by.

After a while the bees, smelling the honey, flew about the opening and soon went in to taste the sweet food.

When the gourd was full, the rabbit slipped up, fastened the hole, and carried the gourd off to Muzimu singing:

“Hello, Mr. Bee, Mr. Stinging Bee,
I ’ve caught you, you see,
I ’ve caught you, you see.”

Again was the animal wizard surprised. “Brother rabbit, you are really a bright little creature, and your sense shall become more and more every day. More than that, I am going to put a spot of white hairs between your ears so everybody can see that your good sense is in your head.”

All male rabbits carry to this day this spot of white hairs.

THE RABBIT AND THE ELEPHANT

One morning in the olden time, the elephant passed near the home of the rabbit. The little fellow was away, and in looking for him the elephant accidentally stepped on his house, which was hidden under a bush, crushed it, and killed his wife and children. The elephant passed on his way not knowing the harm he had done.

When the rabbit returned and saw the ruin of his house and the death of his family he became very sad and at last very angry. This was because he saw the tracks of the elephant who he thought was his friend.

With a sad heart he started out through the forest to find the animal king. When he found him quietly eating from the limb of a tree he began at once: "Mighty one, why did you break up my house and kill my wife and children? "

These words surprised the elephant very much. "Little friend, you are wrong. I have done you no harm."

"Yes, it was you, because I saw your tracks near my home."



“Even so, I did not break up your house and kill your family.”

This kind of talk did not please the rabbit and he went away to think of some plan to harm the animal king.

That night, when the elephant was quietly sleeping, the rabbit drew near and collected some dry grass. Some he put into the ears of the sleeping animal, and some he placed near them. Then setting it afire he ran away.

Soon the blaze and heat of the fire awoke the elephant. He was in great pain and called for help, but none came. He ran around and around, shaking and tossing his head trying to get the burning grass out of his ears.

Then, at last, with a quick move of his trunk he took out the burning grass. But before he did this the hinge of his ears was burnt, so he could not lift them up again, and even now the elephant's ears hang down.

Sometimes we are punished for harmful deeds which we innocently commit.



THE RABBIT AND THE ALLIGATOR

“Brother alligator,” said the rabbit one day, “you seem to take life very easy. Don’t you ever have any trouble?”

“No, my little brother, nothing ever worries me. I have plenty to eat and many hours to sleep,” replied the alligator.

The clever rabbit said nothing more but passed on to his home.

The next day, when the sun was warm, the alligator crawled far upon the river bank into the grass and went to sleep. Near by sat the little rabbit humming softly to himself:

“Oh, Mr. Alligator, we will have some fun,
When the fire burns and you begin to run.”

Moving quietly from his seat the rabbit began to set fire to the grass near by where the alligator lay fast asleep.

After a while the burning grass began to crackle. The alligator awoke. He saw the smoke and felt the heat of the fire. He did not know what to

do. The fire began to burn him as he crawled this way and crawled that way. In pain he cried out, "Help, help!" but no help came.

Then, shutting both eyes and raising his tail in the air, he hurried ahead for the river through the burning grass.

The teasing rabbit, full of laughter, called out, "Hey, brother, what is the time of day? You seem to be in much trouble this time. Do you know what trouble is now?"

The alligator had no time to answer back. He kept straight toward the river and fell quickly in. The water cooled him.

After catching his breath he came to the top of the water and called out: "Never mind, little scamp, if I ever catch you near this river I am going to teach you a lesson."

But the rabbit never goes near the river or the alligator to learn the lesson, and from that time you can never catch the alligator asleep far from the river.

THE WOLF'S BUTTER

One fine morning the wolf asked the rabbit to help build his house. While he was to bring the poles the rabbit was to carry the grass.

Near the spring where the grass grew high and thick, the rabbit saw his friend's store of butter. "How nice and yellow that looks. I must have some," he thought. The hot sun and the thoughts of the butter made him feel hungry.

Then, all of a sudden he dropped his grass, stretched his ears and cried out, "Yes, I hear you. I am coming."

The wolf turned around and said, "Brother rabbit, what is the matter? No one called."

"Yes, it was the voice of Muzimu and I must go to help him work his roots."

"Very well, but lose no time because I must finish to-day."

The rabbit hopped off in another direction from the spring. After getting in the woods he turned back, went to the butter and took a small slice.

Then wiping his mouth against the grass he ran back through the bush to his work.



"Did you help work the roots?" asked the wolf.

"Oh, yes," laughed the merry little fellow.

"What is his name?"

"Little Bit."

"Who is that?" asked the astonished wolf.

"Oh, there are many new creatures coming to the woods these days and they have queer names," replied the rabbit carelessly.

For a while they worked on. The sun became warmer and the thoughts of the nice sweet butter came again and again to the rabbit's mind.

Suddenly he dropped his grass again, stretched his ears and called out, "Yes, I hear you, I am coming."

"Little rabbit, you must be losing your senses. No one called."

"Brother wolf, you are getting deaf. You had better look after your ears. That was Muzimu who called again."

"All must obey Muzimu," returned the other sorrowfully, "but I must get my house finished, so hurry back."

When the rabbit returned looking so spry and happy the wolf asked for whom the wizard was now working his roots.

"Big Slice," was the answer.

"I wonder if these new beasts are as strange as their names?" asked the wolf, looking somewhat doubtfully at his friend.

"Don't know," was the offhand reply, "but I must hurry along with my work."

They worked on until the sun began to droop in the west. The rabbit in the meanwhile thought often of that butter and was not willing to leave any behind. Once again near sunset he suddenly stopped and called out, "Yes, Muzimu, I am coming."

Never was the wolf so much surprised, never had he seen or heard anything like that before. But the name of Muzimu was all powerful.

When the rabbit returned, jumping and frisking about in a gay manner, he was asked once more about the roots.

"All Gone," is the name this time.

The wolf shook his head and began to talk to himself.

Soon it was time to stop work. "Come take supper with me, brother rabbit."

"No, thank you. I must hurry home as my wife isn't feeling well to-day."

With these words the little rogue ran quickly across the field.

The wolf started off at once to get his butter and found it gone. "Just let me get that scamp in my clutches and I'll work some roots," snapped the angry wolf.

THE RABBIT ESCAPES THE WOLF'S ANGER

At last the wolf caught the rabbit. He caught the little fellow in bed one morning fast asleep.

The wolf put him into a bag made of strong leaves and hung it on a limb of a tree. Then he went off to get a stout lash, saying as he left, "Now, you little rogue, I intend to beat you within an inch of your life for stealing my butter."

Fear seized the little fellow. His eyes seemed larger, his ears longer when he heard those terrible words.

But a little courage came to him after a while as he noticed a tiny opening in the bag. Peeping out he saw a fox coming that way. At once an idea came to him. Then he began to sing:

"I am going up so high, so high,
Yes, my friend,
Where there 's nothing but grass so sweet,
Yes, my friend."

The fox stopped and listened with surprise. The song began again:



"Others can't go up so high, so high,
No, my friend,
Where there 's nothing but birds to eat,
No, my friend."

The fox came nearer: "Brother rabbit, is that your voice? "

"Yes, friend, that 's my voice."

"What are you doing in that bag? "

"The eagle is going to carry me up to Myo—the land of good things and no trouble."

"Can't you take me with you, brother? "

"No, the eagle says that he can carry only one at a time to Myo."

The fox begged and begged to go, remembering the words of the song, "Where there 's nothing but birds to eat." At last the rabbit said: "Well, friend, since you beg so hard, I will give you my chance. Some other time I can go."

The fox then unfastened the bag, let the rabbit out and took his place, thinking that the eagle would come at once, take the bag and sail away to Myo.

The rabbit, jumping with joy, hid in the brier bush to await the coming of the wolf.

In a short while the wolf appeared carrying a keen black lash. Up to the bag he went and gave it a mighty cut. He drew back and struck again, and again, slash, slash.

The fox inside was much surprised at this way of sailing to Myo. Smarting with pain he hallooed out: "What is that; what do you want? Go away from there."

The wolf, thinking of his stolen butter, does not hear the voice but keeps striking away, making each blow hotter and hotter. At last the bag breaks and the poor fox falls to the ground crying with pain.

Then, for the first time, the wolf finds out that he has been deceived again and has been beating the fox instead of the rabbit. "Forgive me, friend fox, I thought that scamp of a rabbit was in that bag. Oh, when I get him again I intend to skin him alive!" All this time the little fellow from his hiding-place had seen and heard everything and was now rolling with laughter in the brier bush.

There may be some reason after all why his ears are so long and his eyes so big.

THE RABBIT AND HIS EARS

The great heat of the sun had dried up the streams from which the animals drank. A drought came and the animal people, having nothing to drink, assembled in council.

King elephant, surrounded by his chiefs, listened to the sad stories of the thirsty beasts.

At last it was decided that each one should cut off the tips of his ears and take the fat from them. Then all the fat would be gathered and given to the sharp-clawed phatagin, the great digger of the woods and plains, who would burrow far into the ground until water was reached.

To this idea all cried out in joy, "It is well. Let us cut off the tips of our ears."

All agreed, but when it came to the rabbit's turn to cut off the tips of his ears, he refused and ran away.

Though surprised at this strange act of the rabbit no animal spoke of it then, as all were anxious to see and taste the long desired water.

The fat was given to the horny-backed phatagin, who called his many brothers and sisters, and in



a short while a well was dug and sparkling cool water was ready for all.

The next day when the sun rose the rabbit took a gourd shell in which were some pebbles and went toward the well.

Dragging the shell upon the ground it made a dreadful sound. It seemed to say, "Chug chu, chee chaw, chug chu." This frightened the animals and they ran away into the woods.

Seeing no one near the well he drew up some of the water and drank it. Then the frisky little fellow went down into its shining depths and bathed so that the water became muddy.

When the noise of the shell was heard no more the animals returned. Seeing the muddy water they determined to catch the creature who had been so unkind. They took some leaves, twigs, and a spider's web, called the weaver bird, and had an image made. Over this was smeared some gum. Then the image was placed in the path near the well.

The next morning the rabbit returned to drink and bathe. The gourd shell again said, "Chug chu, chee chaw, chug chu."

When the rabbit saw the image he was surprised. He went up close and looked at it carefully. Then he waited for it to move. Then he winked his eye, but the image did not return the wink.

"Hey, friend," he at last said, "stand aside so

that I may go to the well and get some water." The image made no answer.

"Can't you see that I am in a hurry?" Still no answer.

"See this hand? If you don't let me pass and get some water I am going to slap you." The image kept quiet.

"Take this for such poor manners." With these words the rabbit gave a slap and his right forefoot remained fastened in the gum.

"Why do you hold my hand? Let me go or I will strike you with my other one." The image said nothing. The rabbit struck him with his left forefoot and that became stuck in the gum.

"Oh! Oh!" he cried, "I will now kick you—you surly fellow." He kicked and his hind feet remained fixed in the gum. "Turn me loose, turn me loose, or I will knock you over with my head." The image said nothing, but held on fast. The rabbit gave the image a hard butt with his head, and that also became stuck. Now he could not pull himself loose and began to cry out: "Please let me go, please let me go."

The animals hearing the cry ran out of their hiding-places to see what the image had caught.

"Shame, shame, O brother," they said together. "Did you not agree with us to cut off the tips of your ears, and when it came your turn to do so

did you not refuse? Yet you come to drink from our well and then muddy the water."

Then they took switches and beat him. "We ought to kill you, ungrateful creature; but no, run! run!"

They pulled him loose from the image, let him go, and the rabbit fled to the tall grass to live alone, away from his brothers upon whom he had played such a mean trick.

Now when they come to search for him he runs and hides in a thick patch of brier bushes where they fear to follow.



THE RABBIT AND THE MOON

The days and nights the rabbit spent in the grass and brier bushes far from the anger of the other animals were many and lonely. Though he had kept the length of his ears, he longed for his friends.

At last the bright silver moon from her high home in the sky looked down and smiled upon the lonely little creature. The more she smiled the happier the rabbit became, and he began to look each night for the big, shining face that floated over the world when the sun went to rest.

Early one morning, before the bright light of the sun had told the moon that it was time to rest, the rabbit heard a voice calling to him.

Approaching timidly he saw the silver face of the moon near him. Then he heard a soft whisper: "Oh, lonely little fellow of the fields, go to the homes of men and say, 'Just as the moon dies and rises to life again, so you also shall die and rise to life again.' "

But the little rabbit, when he reached the homes of men, forgot his message and said, "Just as I

die and do not rise again, so you shall die also and not rise to life again."

Then he returned, and the next night, when the moon was looking so bright, so free from stain and blur, the rabbit told what he had said.

"What, did you carry the wrong message?" asked the moon in great surprise. A dark cloud passed over her face and the twinkling stars sank out of sight.

"Oh, unhappy creature with long ears," she said as she struck at him with a hatchet. "Take this and that," and with those words the rabbit's lip was slit and his tail was cut.

But before he fled from the wrath of the moon the frightened creature clawed at her round silver face, leaving those scars which men and animals now see when the day sleeps and when she keeps watch over them.

WHY THE GOAT LEFT THE JUNGLE

Once a feast was given in the far olden time to the lion by many of his animal friends. At the feast there were the leopard, the hyena, the wolf, the jackal, the wild cat, the buffalo, the zebra, and many more.

Returning alone from the feast the lion met a goat near the edge of the forest. After a few words of greeting the lion began to boast of his dignity and his strength. But the goat did not seem to agree with his words.

"What? know you not, little goat, that I am the strongest of all the animals, that when I roar all who hear me bow down their heads and shrink in fear? "

"Indeed I do not know all this," answered the goat. "I know a tiny creature," he continued, "in these woods who is more to be dreaded than you are."

"Bah!" replied the other impatiently, "you anger me. Who may this tiny creature be?" he then asked.

"The serpent," answered the goat, chewing his cud with an indifferent air.



"The serpent!" said the lion surprised.
"What, that crawling creature that feeds on mice and sleeping birds? "

"Yes, that is his name," spoke up the goat.

"Will you match him against me? "

"Yes."

"And if you lose? "

"I will be your slave. But what will you give me if you lose? "

"One hundred bunches of bananas," said the boastful lion.

"Agreed," replied the goat. "So sure am I of victory I will have fifty bunches brought at once."

"To-morrow when the sun is midway the sky we will meet here in this spot," were the parting words of the lion.

After a while a long line of servile animals bearing the fifty bunches of bananas came and laid them at the feet of the goat.

The next day at the appointed time the two animals met.

"Well, Billy, where is your friend who is stronger than I am? I am curious to see him."

"Come with me," said the goat, and together they went to the home of the serpent.

"Are you lion? " asked a hissing voice from the top of a bush.

"Yes, I am; and who are you that do not know me? "

"I am serpent, friend lion, short of sight and slow of movement. Come nearer to me for I see you not."

The proud lion gave a loud roaring laugh and went confidently near the serpent. The serpent moved and arched his neck.

"You shake already," said the lion mockingly.

"Yes, I shake but to strike the better, my friend," hissed the serpent as he darted forward and fixed his poisonous fangs in the right eyebrow of the lion.

At the same moment its body glided round the neck of the strong beast and became buried in his long mane.

Quickly the lion felt the poison in his head and body. In a short time that great animal fell down and lay still and dead.

"Well done!" cried the goat as he pranced joyously around the dead headman of King Elephant.

The goat and the serpent then vowed friendship for each other.

"Now follow me," said the snake. "See that path; follow it and you will find a village where Man lives. There you will have tender leaves, sweet bananas, and plenty of greens each day. Go there and live and may you always find happiness there."

THE FROG AND THE ELEPHANT

One day the frog said to some of his friends:
“King Elephant is my horse.”

These friends a day or so later saw the elephant and said, “You are the horse of the frog.”

The elephant was much surprised at these words. He went at once to the frog asking, “Did you tell your friends that I am your horse? ”

To this question the frog did not reply but said, “Let us go, great king, and find these people so that I may make answer.”

After hopping a long way the frog in a weak voice said, “Mighty one, I am so tired. Let me ride a little on your back.”

“Yes, little one, I will stoop while you get up,” said the kind elephant.

In a short time the cunning frog spoke again: “Good and wise friend, I am going to fall. Hold this piece of cord in your mouth so that I may not slip.”

“Certainly, do as you wish.”

When a little more time passed the frog spoke again: “I see that the flies bite you. Let me get a small twig to fan them off.”



NOBLE (IYEs)

“How kind of you, little fellow. I will stop for you,” returned the elephant.

The twig was found and away they went, the frog holding to the cord with one hand and striking the flies on the elephant’s head with the other.

At last they came to the home of the frog’s friends who saw them and cried out in glee:

“Oh, Mr. Elephant, you are indeed the horse of the frog, the horse of the frog.”



THE FROG AND THE LEOPARD

"My spotted friend, let us run a race from one village to another," said the frog one day to the leopard.

The proud leopard answered, "This is foolishness. A little slow hopping creature such as you are cannot race with me."

"Yes, I can," croaked the frog.

The leopard, thinking that the frog would believe him afraid to race said, "All right, my green friend, we will race to-morrow."

To his home the frog then went and called a great number of his relations. All of them that were the same size and the same shade of green were placed along the road from one village to the other. They were hidden in the waving grass, two here and three there.

When the time came the leopard called out "Come, cousin fox, start the race."

"One two, three, go," said the fox, and the leopard and a frog started together.

The leopard made one great leap, and when he alighted on the ground he called, "Frog, frog," and one of the frogs hidden in the grass croaked "Kalonk, kalonk."

"What, such a creature as you can beat me in a race!" said the leopard in great surprise. "No, it is not possible. I will leap again."

Then he took another long leap greater than the first one. Alighting again on the ground the leopard called out with a feeling of victory, "Frog, frog, have you reached this far place?" and another one of the frogs answered from the grass, "Kalonk, kalonk."

Becoming angry, the leaps of the leopard became longer and longer, but each time he alighted and called "Frog," a frog answered "Kalonk, kalonk."

Thus went the race until the other village was reached. Then the frog that had asked the leopard to race was there awaiting his coming. In that distant time the frog family lived in the bush with many other animals, but after the race the leopard called them together and said: "I am the mighty one in the bush and the great leaper, and after this you cannot live there any more. Close to the waterside must be your home."

To-day, as a result of that race in that far away time, you hear the frogs croaking by the waterside wherever you go.

Punishment comes often to those who practice cunning.

THE JACKAL AND THE LEOPARD

One day a leopard passed the home of the ram. As the leopard had never seen a ram before he spoke to the stranger in a very polite tone: "Good-day, friend, what may your name be? "

The other in a gruff voice and striking his breast with his forefoot replied, "I am ram, great ram; and who are you? "

"A leopard," answered the other, very much frightened at the voice of the stranger. Then taking leave of the ram he ran quickly to his home.

In those days a jackal lived near the home of the leopard, and the latter going to him said with much excitement, "Friend jackal, I am quite out of breath and much frightened, for I have just seen a terrible looking fellow with a large thick head and a gruff deep voice, whose name is ram."

"What a foolish leopard you are to let such a nice piece of flesh stand. Why did you do so? "

"I was much afraid after I heard his voice," answered the leopard.

"Why, he is very harmless," returned the jackal.



"I should never think so from that voice and from the size of his head."

"Well, I know where he lives. Come with me to-morrow and I will show you how timid he is," said the greedy jackal.

The next day they started off for the home of the ram, and as they appeared over the hill the ram, who was looking for a tender bunch of grass, saw them.

At once he went into his house and said to his wife, "I fear that this is our last day, for the jackal and the leopard are both coming after us. What shall we do?"

"Don't be afraid," said his brave wife, "but take up our little child—the lamb—in your arms, go out with him, and pinch his ears so as to make him cry as if he were hungry."

The ram did so as the leopard and the jackal came over the hill.

No sooner did the leopard cast his eyes upon the big head of the ram than fear again seized him and he wished to turn back.

But the jackal had expected this and had made his friend fast to him with a strong twig so he could not get away.

"Come on," cried the hungry jackal.

Then the ram spoke out in a loud gruff voice, pinching his child at the same time, "You have done well, friend jackal, to have brought us the

leopard to eat, for you hear how my child is crying for food."

On hearing these dreadful words and the cries of the lamb, the leopard, forgetful of the strong twig that bound him to the jackal, set off in the greatest alarm dragging the jackal after him over hill and valley, through bushes and over rocks, and never stopped to look behind him until he and his half-dead companion were at their homes again.

The jackal missed a good meal through the fear of his friend, and the leopard received a fright he never forgot; as for the ram, he often says to his wife: "A big voice sometimes makes the coward seem bold."

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THE JACKAL AND THE HERON

High on top of a rock lived a gentle dove with her little children. Near this peaceful home there prowled nightly a selfish and cowardly jackal.

One night he snarled out to the dove, "Give me one of your little children to eat."

The dove quickly answered, "I shall not do it. What kind of mother do you think I am? "

"Give me one at once, otherwise I will fly up to your nest and destroy you and all your family," yelled the hungry thief.

The poor frightened dove, wishing to save some of her family, threw one of her little children down to him.

The jackal went off with it, but returned the next night and demanded another child, and by threats succeeded in getting one.

A few days later the long-necked heron came to visit the gentle dove, and, finding her in tears, asked, "What is the matter, dear friend? "

The poor dove then told of her misfortune.

After listening to the sad story, the heron asked with much surprise, "Are you so silly as to give your children to that cowardly fellow? Jackals cannot fly."



The dove then felt very much ashamed of her own folly. The next time she refused to throw down one of her children saying, "No, I will not. Besides; I fear you no longer. Heron says jackals do not fly."

"So she told you that. Well, heron shall pay for this," said the sneaking creature.

Early one morning, a day or so later, while on his way home from his nightly prowling, the jackal saw the heron standing under the shade of a tree near the water's edge.

"Ah, my friend, good morning," said the artful prowler.

"Good morning, jackal," returned the heron.

"Sister heron, when the wind comes from this side, how do you stand?"

The bird slowly turned her neck toward the jackal and said, "I stand thus, bending my neck on one side."

"When a storm comes, and when it rains, how do you stand, sister?"

The unsuspecting bird then replied, "I stand thus, bending my neck."

Then the revengeful jackal quickly struck her neck. From that evil day the heron's neck has been bent.



THE JACKAL AND THE HYENA

One morning the jackal and the hyena were seen together coming down the steep slope of a mountain side. Not a sound was heard and not a village was within sight.

These two robbers, having made their dreadful yelps and howls throughout the night, were now quietly seeking their dark caves.

A heavy mist hung over the mountain path as they came down. Fleecy clouds seemed to rise from the ground as the sun moved higher up in the sky.

As one cloud after another arose, those rovers had a desire to mount one of them. The desire became very great in the jackal, and, taking courage, he mounted upon one of the rising clouds and ate of it as if it were food.

When he wanted to come down, he called out to his companion, "Cousin hyena, as I am going to divide with you, catch me as I fall."

His cousin caught him, breaking the force of the fall.

Then the hyena mounted a rising cloud and ate of it, as did his friend.

When he was satisfied, he called out from his high seat on the cloud, "Dear cousin, now catch me as well as I caught you."

"I shall catch you well, cousin—come down," answered the jackal.

Standing under the cloud he stretched out his forefeet in order to break the fall of his companion. Then when the falling body came near the earth, the cowardly jackal cried out as if in great pain:

"Oh, me! Oh, me! a thorn has pierced my foot"—then quickly stepped aside.

The falling hyena struck the earth with great force and was badly hurt.

Then, in fear, the jackal fled from the scene of the disaster, and from that time has been the vagabond of the woods. He loves the twilight and the darkness.

As for the unfortunate hyena, his left hind foot has remained shorter and smaller ever since that fatal fall from the fleecy cloud.

Evil companionship often brings sorrow.

THE HYENA'S SPOTS

The hyena saw the jackal one night and pretended that he had forgotten the mean trick that had been played on him. "Let us hunt together again, friend. I know where there are some bee trees. So bring your bag to-morrow and your children, then you can carry home much honey."

The jackal dared not refuse, and came the next night to the hyena's home bringing two of his little ones, each one with a small bag.

Off to the bee trees they went. "Go up first, brother jackal, and fill your bag. I will show your cubs how to climb a small tree and gather the sweetness."

Then the hyena went off a short distance and put the little jackals in his hunting bag saying, "Now I will pay back that wrong of the jackal, and carry his little ones to show to my brethren."

From his tree the jackal saw what had been done and, after filling his bag with honey, came down with it. The other one soon drew near saying, "Let us eat from your bag while your little ones gather."



Much honey did these prowlers then eat—but the jackal did not forget to think of his two cubs.

After a time he said, "You are stronger than I, but let me see if I can carry your big bag to that tall bee tree and bring it back without stopping to rest."

"All right," said the unsuspecting hyena, who was now a little drowsy after eating his meal of honey.

Reaching the tall tree the jackal took out his children, and told them to run quickly home, then he climbed the tree and filled the empty bag with honey and with many sleeping bees.

Coming back to the drowsy hyena he said in a most innocent way: "I did not know that I was so strong or that the distance was so far. Wake up, brother, go tell my children to wait here while I help you home with your heavy bag of honey."

The hyena pretended to carry the message, then came back and took up his bag which he thought held the two little jackals. They soon reached the settlement of the hyenas where the jackal said, "Think of me when you and your brethren eat the honey. Good-night, friend." He then ran quickly away. The hyena called his brethren, "Come, wake up, and look at the cubs of the jackal; here is a good feast. Let us go to the cave so they cannot escape."

Into the cave they went. The bag was opened and out flew hundreds of awakened, angry bees. They buzzed in this direction, they buzzed in that, they stung here, they stung there. Howls of pain came from the cave, and soon through the opening the beasts came running as if all the imps of the woods were after them. Through the forest they dashed, howling as if mad, looking for the nearest stream of water.

A few weeks later the jackal caught a glimpse of a hyena prowling through the bush. All over his body he saw many ugly black spots which made the jackal say to himself: "The angry bee leaves an ugly spot as well as a painful sting."

THE HYENA'S PUNISHMENT

The great law of Muzimu had been disobeyed by the hyena. Instead of killing his food he fed upon the flesh and bones of the dead.

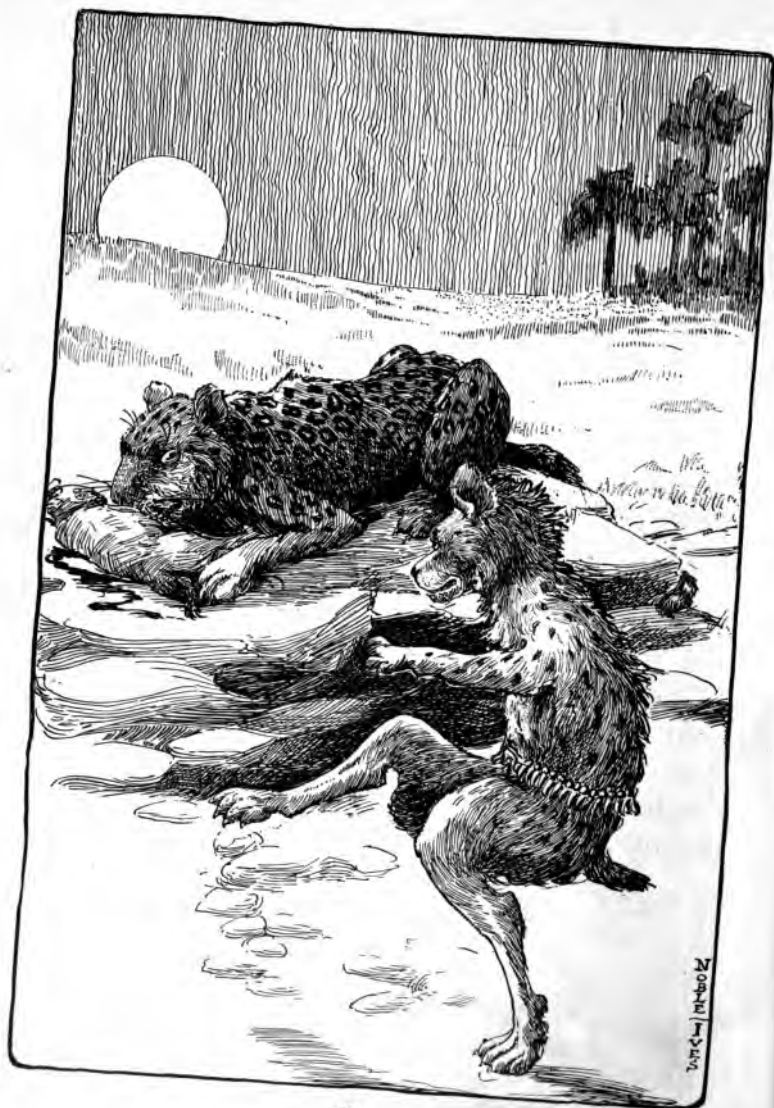
The hunting animals told the leopard to visit mighty Muzimu and ask what must be done to punish the offender of the law, "Hunters must always kill their food and never eat meat or bones found dead."

To Muzimu the leopard went and by him was told what to do to punish the hyena.

The hyena did not intend to obey the law, but went often to beg for the bones that were left after the leopard's meals. When begging he laughed and danced around in the strangest manner, singing a queer little song:

"Oh, leopard, brave leopard,
Your friend is hungry.
Oh, leopard, brave leopard,
Please give me bones."

"Not bones of the dead, but live meat you must eat," answered the leopard.



NOTE: I have

"Live meat I like not, brave leopard," returned the dancing hyena. But no bones he received, yet he came back again and again. Then he would lope away, prowl through the bush looking for dead meat or bones in the graves of men.

Not the law of Muzimu, but greediness, made the hyena think often of what the leopard said. One night he returned to the cave and sang another tune:

"Oh, leopard, kind leopard,
Live meat I will eat.
Oh, leopard, friend leopard,
Live meat I will eat."

The leopard now felt pleased. The time had come to give Muzimu's punishment.

"When the moon is full, come to the high rock near the falls, hyena; I will show you live meat," was the spotted one's answer to the song.

Six nights later all the hunters came to the rock near the river and hid in the thick grass. Soon was heard the strange laughing howl of the hyena drawing nearer and nearer. On the high rock stood the leopard, looking like a yellow spotted statue in the bright moonlight. On the heavy branch of a tree overhanging the river crouched a young antelope. In the water below the shadow of the limb and the beautiful creature shone as bright as day.

A few moments later the ugly hyena was heard singing, "Here I am, brother."

"Not so loud," spoke the spotted one on the rock; "to-night you will learn to eat live meat,"—then, nodding his head toward the shadow, "look there at the fat antelope. Quick, now, before he jumps."

A slight movement of the limb was reflected in the water below. The stupid hyena, thinking that this choice bit of food was about to jump, threw himself into the water to seize what he thought was a live animal.

The swift current rushing to the falls swept the greedy hyena along, but before he went over the song of the hunters reached his ears:

"The law you would not keep,
Good-bye, hyena, good-bye.
Dead meat and bones you would eat,
Good-by, hyena, good-bye."

THE WOLF AND HIS TWO DINNERS

A wolf had been invited to two dinners to be given on the same day and at the same hour. One was to be given by big fox and the other by little fox. The homes of these friends of the wolf were on separate roads which joined at a fork. The wolf, true to his nature, had accepted both invitations.

When the dinner hour was near he started out, eager to eat at both houses. Coming to the place in the woods where the two roads joined, he stopped to consider which to visit first.

Starting down one road he went a short distance, then turned back to the fork. Then, starting down the other, he went the same distance and turned back to the fork. Again he started, and again he turned back.

This he did several times. He could not make up his mind which friend to visit first, as he was anxious to eat both dinners. Now while the wolf was trying to make up his mind, the hour for the two meals had passed.

In a short while some of the wolf's friends,



coming from the dinner of big fox, seeing him at the fork of the road running back and forth called out, "Hi, brother wolf, what are you doing here?"

"Why, I am going to my friend, big fox, to dine."

"Ho, ho, dinner is over and a very good one it was," they all laughed.

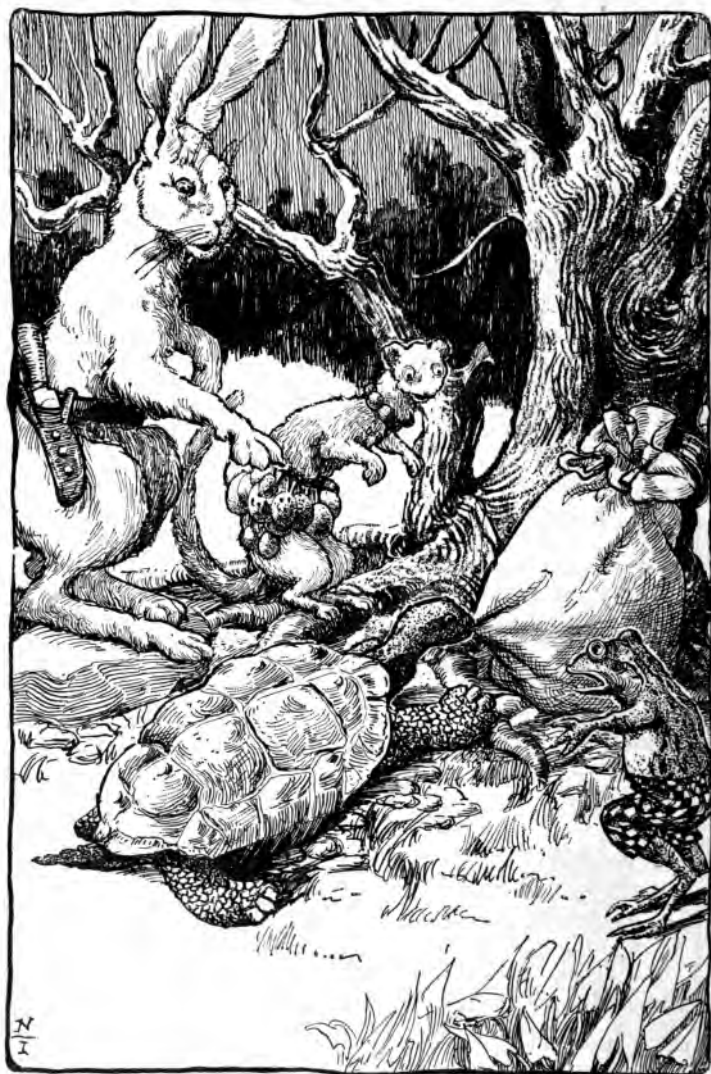
The wolf was very much put out because he had lost one meal. He then ran quickly off to the other road toward the home of little fox, hoping to get there in time for some of the dinner. Presently he met the friends who had eaten with little fox.

"Hi, brother wolf, where are you going?" they asked.

"Why, I am going to my friend, little fox, to dine," he replied. These friends also laughed and said, "Ho, ho, dinner is over and a very good one it was."

Now was the greedy wolf angry. Instead of eating two dinners he was to eat none. You may imagine what his thoughts were as he slowly trotted home, weary and hungry.

Greediness snaps at so many things that it often loses them all.



THE SENSE OF THE WEASEL

One day Man put a bag down under a large tree. The weasel saw him and afterwards went and called the rabbit and said: "Friend rabbit, I saw the upright one put something down under a tree, but I could not take it as it was too heavy. Come, let us go and see if you can move it."

The rabbit went and attempted to move the bag, but could not. Then the quick, jumping frog was called, but he failed; then the slow moving turtle, but he met with the same result.

When these friends of the weasel had gone away he went again and took hold of the bag, but found again that it was too heavy, so he did not know what to do.

A pigeon flying by saw the trouble of the weasel. Alighting upon a tree near by, the pigeon cooed to him: "Friend weasel, lean the bag over, bend it, and then take it."

As soon as the weasel heard those words he did as the pigeon said. He bent his neck, put his mouth to the bag and as he drew it towards him the bag went upon his head.

Then he went joyfully to his home with the bag upon his head, making a strange sight as he ran, and bringing smiles to the faces of his many friends.

Putting the bag down upon the ground the weasel heard the pigeon again cooing these words as it flew by: "The bag, little one, has nothing in it but solid sense. Give some of it to your small friends."

So he called the rabbit, the frog, and the turtle and said to them, "Friends, this bag of Man, the upright one, has nothing in it but solid sense. To-day we will get some of it, but do not tell our big and strong brothers of the woods. To each of you I will give a little and what remains I will hide in my home."

So he opened the bag and gave a little sense to each of his tiny chums saying, "If you take this home which I give you, it will keep you from harm."

After that day those little fellows became the most clever creatures of the field, as you have seen. The rabbit, frog, and turtle show great cunning in all their actions, and as for the weasel, he is known as the king of sense.

When he runs into his tiny hole he comes out behind you and runs until you see him no more.

Wisdom is not always with the strong and mighty but often with the smallest and most harmless.

THE TURTLE, THE WOLF, AND THE HYENA

One morning under a tall palm tree a wolf caught a turtle. He carried his victim to the home of the hyena.

"Let us kill the crawling fellow," said those vicious beasts.

The wolf asked, "How shall we kill him? "

With a mocking laugh the hyena replied, "You, grayish wolf, shall kill him with your sharp claws."

Thrusting his head out from his shell the turtle sang:

"Turtle of forest,
Claws of wolf,
Claws not kill me a bit."

The hyena then in a hoarse voice snarled, "Let us throw him upon a stone."

The turtle then sang out very merrily:

"Turtle of forest,
Stone of forest,
Stone not kill me a bit."



Then fire was mentioned, but the turtle sang louder in notes of joy:

“Turtle of forest,
Fire of forest,
Fire not kill me a bit.”

At last water was suggested, then the turtle in doleful tones wailed:

“Woe is me, I shall die there,
What shall I do? ”


The wolf and the hyena then showed their sharp teeth and growled with satisfaction, “ We have it, we have found the way to kill this slow moving creature.”

They carried him to the river and threw him into its depths. The turtle dived and after a short time he came to the top, swam quickly away, singing more loudly and joyfully than before:

“O grayish wolf, O prowling hyena,
In water is my home,
In water is my home.”

“Well, think of it, that slow, stupid, crawling fellow fooled us,” snapped the wolf and the hyena in anger.

To this day the turtle never wanders from the water’s edge to seek the shade of the palm tree.





THE HOME OF THE RAT

In that far off day a rat once passed the home of the toad, the cousin of the frog. Having eaten much grain that day the rat felt like trying some kind of game with his little friend.

Coming up to him he called out, "Friend toad, I can do more than you."

"Bah!" returned the toad, "though you can run and I only hop and hop, yet you cannot do more than I."

"We shall see to-morrow, then," replied the rat, passing on to his home.

"All right," came back the voice of the toad.

The next day when the sun reached the middle of the sky, the wise men of the village felt its heat and went to sit down under the shade of the tall palm trees.

The rat and the toad had made ready for the game. Friends of each were invited and a large number of tiny animals assembled to see which of the little creatures would be the victor.

The game was to be a simple one. The rat was to do whatever the toad did.

With a loud cheer from the animal visitors the

toad started off and leaped directly toward the group of men resting under the palm tree.

When the men saw the toad, one of them said, "Here comes a toad, let him pass, do not touch him, if you do your hands will become sore."

So no one touched the toad and he passed safely through.

"Hurrah for the toad!" they all shouted. Then a loud cheer came from all the animals again when the rat started out to do as the toad had done.

Upon seeing the rat coming straight toward them the men took sticks and tried to kill him.

In great fright he came running back to the starting place. "Hi, hi, frightened one, ho, ho, coward," all jeered.

These words made the rat all the more anxious to outdo the toad and another attempt was made. The toad hopped again safely through the midst of the men, but when the rat came once more among them, sticks and stones were thrown at him so rapidly that in trying to escape he was forced to run and hide in a hole in the ground.

And from that time rats peer out from their holes, before venturing forth, to see if men are near.

It is not always wise to try to do everything you see others do.

THE ALLIGATOR AND THE MOOR HEN

Among the water birds is one known as the moor hen. It lives and builds its nest close to the water's edge. Though it has many enemies the alligator is not one of them.

One day while the alligator was sunning himself on the river bank he ate a crab and its claw stuck in the hole of an old tooth. This tooth began to pain him a great deal and he began to moan, "Oh, my tooth, my tooth; some one please come and help me."

He looked in all directions but no help came. After awhile the moor hen swimming by heard the moans and stopped.

"Oh, sister moor hen, help me," sobbed the poor fellow who was in much pain.

"I am sorry, brother, but you might eat me if I put my bill between your strong jaws," returned the water bird.

"Never, never; please help me, I am in such misery," moaned the alligator.

"But you are so tricky, brother," replied the other, about to swim away.

"Please don't go, help me and I will be your friend, always."



The alligator seemed to be in such pain and his words sounded so true the bird took pity on him.

Swimming to the bank she waded out, went upon the shore, put her head into his mouth, and with her bill pulled out the crab claw.

"Thank you, sister moor hen. Oh, what a relief! I shall never forget this kindness."

The alligator kept his word. Now, that water bird can walk about the moor and river shore, catch crabs and shrimps, build her nest near the alligator, while he and his family never think of molesting her.

A kind act in the hour of need sometimes makes an enemy a friend.



THE HAWK AND THE ROOSTER

A hawk was very hungry. Nowhere could he find anything to eat.

Flying high in the air he called out to the bright sun: "Oh, bright shining friend, I am so hungry, and for want of food I am almost dead. Please help me! "

"Friend hawk, if you can catch me asleep in bed I will agree to find you something to eat," replied the sun as he passed on his journey across the sky.

So day after day the hungry bird tried to catch the light of day asleep in bed, but each time his journey had begun before the hawk came.

"I am so tired of trying to catch the sun asleep," said the bird at last after many failures.

Then he thought of asking the rooster to help him. After listening to his story that proud bird said, "Brother hawk, come and sleep near my home. In the morning when you hear me flap my wings and crow, fly at once to the sun's home and you will catch him before he gets out of bed."

That evening the hawk slept on a tree limb near where the rooster lived.

Before the break of day, when he heard the flapping of wings and the crowing of the rooster, he started at once for the home of the sun. There the bright and glorious light of day was found asleep.

Hearing a knock at his door he called out, "Who is that? "

"It is friend hawk," replied the bird.

"What do you want with me? "

"Did you not promise that if I caught you in bed that you would find me something to eat? I have caught you, and I am very hungry," came back the voice of the bird.

Then, in an angry tone spoke the sun: "Mr. Hawk, turn around and go to the one who told you how to catch me in bed and let him feed you."

This answer did not please the hungry one. "Bright shining sun, help me as you promised."

"No, no, but go away from here at once or I will come forth and burn you up."

In great fear and anger the starved bird flew away to the home of the rooster.

"Well, how did you make out, friend hawk? "

The story was soon told.

Then said the rooster, "You can't get anything to eat from me."

"I am tired and hungry and must have something," replied the other.

"All I have are my wife and her children, and you cannot have any of them," returned the rooster.

Hearing these words, the hawk, with an angry twist of his tail, flew high in the air and circled around watching the other bird from afar.

The rooster soon forgot all about the matter. Near by him the little chickens were playing about in the grass.

Suddenly the hawk swooped down and caught one of them in his sharp claws. Flying with it to a big tree he made of it a dainty meal the taste of which he liked very much.

"How sweet and tender that meat was," he said, wiping his beak on a tree limb. "Hereafter when I am hungry I shall look for some more chickens."

To this day this bird of prey has kept his word.



THE OWL AND HIS FRIENDS

"O brothers, brothers, dance in the bright firelight,
Kick up your heels and dance all night,
Pretty girls, pretty girls, smile at the boys nigh,
Dance boys, dance and swing the girls high.
Waugh, O! Waugh, O! Waugh, O!
Waugh, O! "

Thus sang the owl one night when he was making music for his friends at a large party of the animal people.

What a good time everyone was having and how happy all seemed!

At that time the owl was a great singer and musician. Whenever the wood folks gathered for a merry time he was asked to make music for them.

To these gatherings he would come on condition that he was to sing and play in a dark place and that no one would try to see him.

He stood this evening while playing and singing on the limb of a thick bush hidden behind a tall tree.

When dancing stopped so that they could go to supper, the wolf was heard to ask, "Are you enjoying yourself, friend deer? "

"I am having a very pleasant time, brother wolf," was the deer's answer.

"I am glad to see you, cousin leopard," the lion was heard to say. "Was n't that music fine? "

"Yes, it was very good, but I should like to see the singer."

"But you can't see him, leopard."

"Why not?"

"He is afraid of the light and always sings and plays in the dark," returned the lion.

Some small birds and animals hearing this thought they would have some fun.

"Let us go and find him," one of them suggested.

"But we can't see in the dark," another one said.

"Make a light, then, and let us look for him."

"No, don't do that," ordered the lion.

"Why not; we only wish to have a little fun," one of the little people said.

"If you carry the light near him he will not play at our dances again," returned the lion.

But these words did not change the minds of the mischief makers and after everything was quiet, and when they thought all had forgotten,

they took a bright light and carried it to the bush where the owl was.

His song had just begun again,

“O brothers, brothers, dance in the bright firelight,
Kick up your heels and dance all night.”

Before he had sung the other words the light was suddenly put right in front of his face. Its bright glare made his big eyes blink and his ears become very erect. He ruffled his feathers with much fear and made many loud hoots.

The unusual noise, and the laugh of the mischief-makers, brought all the animals of the party to the bush and among them was the lion.

Looking around quickly at the crowd he spoke out in anger: “Friend owl, this light was brought by those little scamps the rabbits, rats, squirrels, sparrows, partridges, and the ducks.”

“I shall never forget them,” returned the frightened and angry owl, “and never more shall I come to sing and play for you.” With these words he flew away into the darkness.

This is why this bird of the night is now so hated and feared of all birds, and why he makes constant warfare upon those creatures that brought the bright light in that far off day.



II

THE RIVAL ROOSTERS

In the home of Man there were many hens and two fine roosters, one red and the other gray. Each bird, thinking that he was the handsomer, tried in many ways to show off his good points to the hens.

The red rooster would stand in the sunlight with his head perched to one side so that the sheen of his pretty feathers could be seen by all. Mighty was the strut and crow of the gray bird and proud was he of his deep red comb and wattles, which he shook often when the hens were in sight. These silly actions of each annoyed the other very much. "What a vain creature you are," said the red fowl one morning.

"I am not the only one," quickly returned the gray bird.

"What do you mean?" flashed back the other one ruffling up his feathers.

"Just what I said," answered the gray rooster bending his head and neck as if to fight.

Without another word the red bird began to jump, flutter and strike with his spurs his gray rival. The attack was so sudden the gray rooster

was quickly beaten. He ran and hid under the house of Man.

After that the gray cock was afraid to come near the red one. Still he did many things to worry the other proud fellow. Every time the red rooster flapped his wings or crowed the gray one did the same and sang back, "I can do that too, too-oo-oo."

In the mornings when the crow of the red fowl said day was nigh the other one would do the same, only his voice was louder and stronger.

"If I could only get to him there would be trouble," thought the red bird at such times. For quite a while this went on until the red rooster made up his mind to put a stop to it. He found out the roosting-place of his gray enemy. Then going to the home of the fox he asked, "Would you like to have me show you a fat young rooster? "

"May your feathers be more beautiful for such a favor," returned the artful fox.

"Well, come to-night near the cedar tree in the yard of Man."

"All right, look for me," said the fox.

That night when the moon was high the fox crept into the yard. Near the tree stood the red rooster who whispered softly: "Look, friend fox, on that low limb, there is your supper fast asleep."

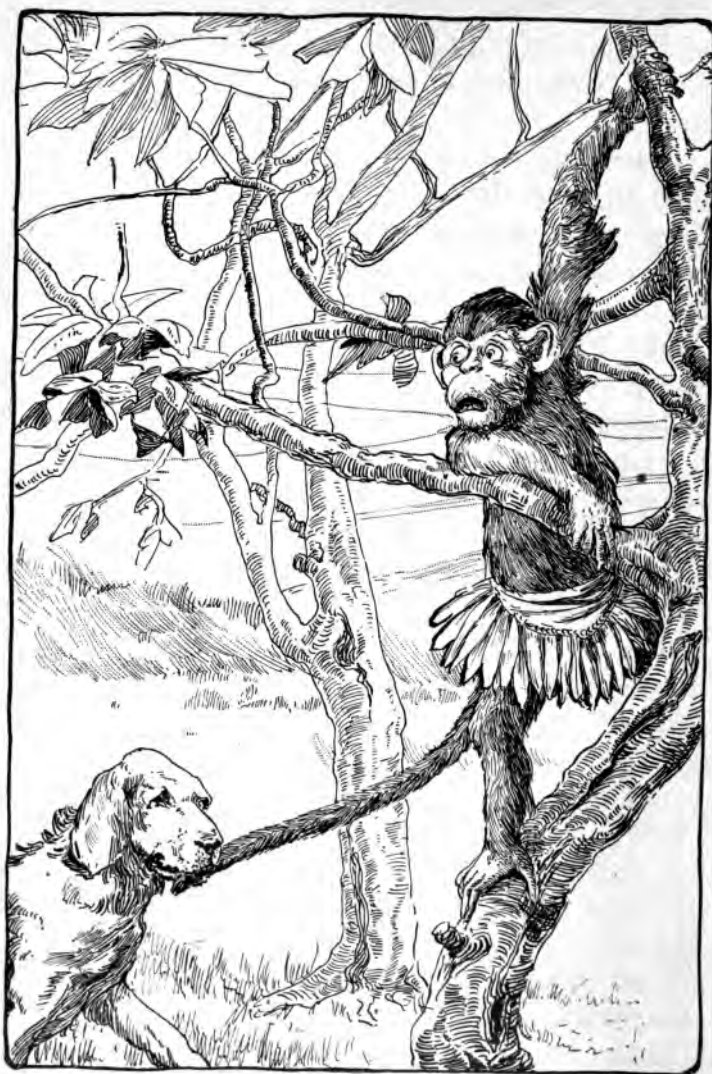
The fox looked up, saw the gray rooster, and

with one leap pulled him to the ground and killed him. Never did a meal seem so sweet to that robber.

When he had finished eating, the red rooster, glad to know his enemy was gone, asked, "How did you enjoy your meal, good friend? "

"Very much, very much. Your brother was so nice and fat. I enjoyed the meal so much that I want some more." With these words the fox seized the red rooster by the neck and ate him also.

We often hurt ourselves in trying to hurt others.



THE MONKEY FINDS WORRY

"What is the matter with some of our friends?" the monkey asked his wife one day.

"Worry, my dear, nothing but worry."

"But," he replied, "what is that? We have never seen him come this way."

"Don't talk about it. Some day worry may come when you least expect, then you may know what it is."

This did not satisfy the monkey. So to the home of Muzimu he went. "Why is it all my friends have seen worry except me?" was the question he asked the wizard.

"Do you want to see him, brother monkey?"

"Yes, mighty Muzimu, what may this strange creature be?"

"Well, you may learn to-day. Wait here for my return."

With these words the wizard went into an inner room, giving the monkey a chance to look at the strange objects about him. With these objects, called charms, the wizard did many wonderful things.

In a short while he returned with a bag. "Here

you are, brother monkey. In that bag is worry. Carry it to a large field without trees or bushes. When in the middle open the bag, but not until then."

With a merry laugh the monkey started for an open field carrying with him the heavy bag. He was anxious to see what it contained, so he hurried along. When he reached an open space he put down the bag saying, "Now let me see what worry is." The string was drawn, the bag opened and quick as a flash out jumped a dog. With a bark he made for the monkey. The frightened little fellow dashed across the field, the dog close behind.

"Oh, please don't bite me, friend dog."

"Can't promise you," he snapped, running faster than before.

Over the field they ran, the dog getting nearer and nearer. Soon they reached the edge of the woods and up the first tree sprang the terrified monkey—but not before the dog nipped a bit of his tail.

During the rest of the day around the trunk of the tree the dog jumped and barked: "Come down, brother monkey, and meet friend worry, come down."

But the monkey only sobbed and cried. He never had been so frightened, never in such pain, and never so miserable.

At last when night came the hungry dog went off to get some food. The scared monkey came down the tree, ran quickly home, and told his wife and children what had taken place.

Then he made them follow him to the top of a tall tree, saying as he did so, "Never again will I live on the ground where there is so much wrong and so much worry."

One who goes hunting for trouble is sure to find it.



JAN, THE ANIMAL JUDGE

One long to be remembered day the deep silence of the woods was broken by the shrill cries of many birds.

Messengers had been sent to the court of Jan, the judge of the animal world. Now Jan was remarkable among the animals, as he stood upright on his two hind legs, using his forelegs as arms.

In the darksome recesses of the underbrush, surrounded by his guards, the messengers found him in his courtyard thinking about the many disputes that were before him for settlement.

After being admitted, one of the messengers said in eager tones: "Oh, wise judge, someone has torn the pretty nest of the weaver bird. Much beloved is she among her friends, and now, in the name of those friends, we demand satisfaction for her."

"She shall have satisfaction," Jan replied at once. . . "Ho, guards, call the court! "

The trumpets were blown, the drum was sounded, and many grass mats were spread for the meeting of the coming assembly.

From far and near came the friends of the weaver bird. There were the ostrich, the horn-bill, the pelican, the flamingo, the ibis, the parrot, the heron, the dove, with a large number of other birds—all making a show of much beauty.

The sound of Jan's drum had brought also many of the four-footed beasts. There were the elephant, the antelope, the zebra, and the boar. There were also the tiny ant and other small creatures of the earth, all anxious to hear the complaint of the little bird.

After all had come, the guards called out, "Silence, O birds and beasts. Let the good and wise judge hear the story of the weaver."

In a kindly manner he bade her to make complaint. In a low, trembling voice the bird began:

"O good and wise Jan, I am called the weaver bird, sometimes the sociable weaver because all of our family build their nests in a single tree under a long roof of dry grass. Here my kindred, as many as the leaves of yonder tree, live together in our separate little homes. My friends say that these homes are very pretty and very different from any other in the forest. All of my relations are very industrious and live in much peace, and yet, O Judge, the parrot comes and tears our nests and kills many of our little children."

When the story was finished cries of "Shame! shame!" came from all assembled. Then in stern

tones spoke the judge: "Parrot, come forth and give this wonderful little weaver bird satisfaction."

The gay, chattering parrot came forward saying: "I am not guilty, great judge. Ostrich is the guilty one."

"Come forth, ostrich," called Jan. With a haughty step, the tall bird came out saying: "I am not the one, as I do not climb trees. I think striped zebra knows something of this matter."

"Nonsense," said the zebra when he came forward; "I do not fly, but the boar knows all about this nest."

With a loud and coarse laugh the boar cried out, "No, no, not the boar, but the elephant has done this unkind act."

"Why should I do such a deed to a tiny bird?" asked the elephant with an impatient toss of his trunk. "Call the ant, as he knows more than any of us about this bird's nest."

These denials and charges angered Jan who thundered out, "Enough of this nonsense. Hear my sentence:

Ostrich bite the parrot,
Zebra kick the ostrich,
Boar butt the zebra,
Elephant stamp the boar,
Ant sting the elephant."

At once there was much confusion in the court.

There were shrill cries. fierce roars. a great flapping of wings. and much pawing of the ground.

In the midst of it all there suddenly appeared Muzimu, the wizard. Muzimu. the all-knowing one. At once there was silence. His eyes showed anger and his shaggy body seemed more shaggy than ever. He seemed to know at once what the matter was, and in a deep voice began: "O foolish judge, your sentence is a silly one. From to-day you and all your family shall live in trees and walk on all fours—monkeys they shall be called, and you, Jan, shall be known as baboon. Men will laugh at you and make sport of you and your family for all time. Depart, birds and beasts. Strife will be among you always."



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